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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT - U.S. Foreign Policy - Iraq -
Afghanistan - Somalia -Globalization Middle East - Olmert in Paris -
Hamas Iran - Regional Strategy
PARIS - Thursday, June 15, 2006

(A) SUBJECTS COVERED IN TODAY'S REPORT:

U.S. Foreign Policy - Iraq - Afghanistan - Somalia -Globalization
Middle East - Olmert in Paris - Hamas
Iran - Regional Strategy

B) SUMMARY OF COVERAGE:

Domestic stories dominate this morning, with the turbulence experienced by EADS, the parent company of Airbus, a major story. Its stock fell sharply - by 30% - yesterday as delays for the A380 were announced. Liberation headlines "A Deadly Series on the Tarmac" as it reports on the EADS "industrial catastrophe" and revisits the Clearstream scandal, which has ramifications with EADS. Another economic story in today's lead is the government's plans to merge the government owned Gaz de France (GDF - gas utility company) with the private company Suez. Le Figaro reports on its front page: "PM Villepin could be forced to abandon his plan" because of opposition from his own party in the required privatization of GDF before the merger.

La Croix stands apart with a front page devoted to: "Afghan Women Who Are Not Resigned." The lead story includes a report on elected Afghan women visiting France, its Parliament and a number of associations. They will be meeting Bernadette Chirac today. The editorial, entitled "Afghan Fronts," by Dominique Quinio reminds everyone that "the border with Pakistan remains an area of instability: for the U.S. and NATO, this new awakening of the Afghan front means increased insecurity." (See Part C) Inside, Francois d'Alancou reports on the reinforcement of French forces.

PM Olmert's visit to France is reported: "Chirac Asks Olmert to Negotiate with the Palestinians." (Le Figaro) In Liberation, an op-ed by Theo Klein is entitled, "Dear Ehud Olmert..." in which the Franco-Israeli lawyer begs the Israeli PM to "renew the dialogue with the Palestinians." In Le Figaro, the weekly column by Alexandre Adler is entitled: "What to Do With Hamas?" Adler invites the international community to "ensure the economic survival of the awakening Palestinian State..." (See Part C)

Iraq and U.S. foreign policy elicit an analysis from essayist Andre Glucksmann in Le Figaro entitled "America, the Iraq War and 'Somalization' of the Planet." "Somalia is the in vitro laboratory where the abomination to end all abominations is at work: the war against civilians..." Liberation reports on "The Islamic Conquest of Somalia" while in Le Figaro Tanguy Berthemet describes how "Islamic law is taking over in Somalia." (See Part C)

Le Figaro's lead international page is devoted to Iran, its role in the "(G8) counter-summit in Shanghai" (See Part C) and to how Russia is positioning its pawns in Central Asia."

Les Echos announces on its front page: "Disamericanization of the World" referring to an inside column entitled "Globalization Continues, But America Is No Longer Leading It." (See Part C)

Liberation carries an article entitled "America's International Image in A Downward Spiral" noting the Pew Center's findings on America's image abroad. "In France, the number of Americanophiles went from 43% to 39% during the course of the year, while it was at over 62% before 2002... Anti-Americanism in France is truly absurd, especially when one notes that the French have a better opinion of a totalitarian country like China (60%) than of a friendly democracy like the U.S. (39%)."

A separate report in Liberation, "Bush Thinking About Closing Guantanamo" drafted from dispatches quotes President Bush during his press conference: "Guantanamo does present a pretext for those who want to say that the U.S. does not respect the values it defends" and comments: "The Bush administration is indeed trying to find ways to empty the camp..."

(C) SUPPORTING TEXT/BLOCK QUOTES:

"Afghan Fronts"

Dominique Quinio in Catholic La Croix 06/15): "While the world's

attention is focused on the Iraqi powder keg and the Middle East, Afghanistan is gripped by new convulsions... Coalition forces launched a new offensive in the south. The end of the Taliban and the changes which followed, including democratic elections, have not pacified the country. While the Taliban continue to destabilize Afghanistan, its population is not enjoying the benefits of democracy or of international aid... Karzai has asked his Iranian and Pakistani neighbors to help him contain the poppy and drug industry, which he cannot control alone. For the U.S. and the coalition, the Afghan awakening means increased insecurity, increased costs and the need to send more troops... This is a major challenge for NATO as it takes over command in July... The other battle is that of Afghan women: 30 of their elected members are visiting Paris to explain the difficulties they face in their daily lives."

"America, the Iraq War and 'Somalization' of the Planet"

Andre Glucksmann in right-of-center Le Figaro (06/15): "... In Afghanistan, the disbanded Taliban are once again causing havoc... in Somalia the fanatics have taken over and forbidden the broadcasting of the 'satanic' World Cup Soccer championship. Iraq weeps for its dead on a daily basis... But Iraq is not Vietnam and Zargawi is not Ho Chi Minh. Iraq is coming out of thirty years of the worst and bloodiest of dictatorships... The threat hovering over Iraq is not a 'Vietnamization' but rather 'Somalization...' Today, Somalia has been taken over by armed groups that go by the name 'Islamic Tribunals...' and who are financed by CIA secret funds: a new Afghan of the Taliban may well develop in the Horn of Africa... The world's war zones have different leaders - in East Timor it is the UN, in Afghanistan it is NATO, in Iraq the Pentagon - but the scenarios are similar. The Somali model is spreading... with civilians used as pawns... Would it have been better not to topple Saddam...? The Iraqis have voted three times, each time their numbers increased despite the threats. They do not regret the fall of Saddam... Is it time for the GIs and their allies to leave Iraq, as they did Somalia? Even the most anti-American of governments, the most obsessed, like France, are crossing their fingers hoping this will not happen. The fight to keep the world from the Somali model has just begun... Either we accept a general Somalization as we try to find refuge in a Euro-Asian fortress, or we rekindle a most needed democratic, military euro-Atlantic alliance."

"Globalization Continues, but America No Longer Leads"

Jean-Marc Vittori in right-of-center Les Echos (06/15): "If the American empire remains strong, new national or regional powers are emerging alongside it. After having been piloted by the United States, the upsurge in exchanges is now orchestrated by giant businesses around the world. This major change could well threaten globalization itself. First, because the Americans feel that the movement is escaping them and they are getting edgy -- hence the irritation of the Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, whenever she hears the world 'multipolar,' or Washington's growing protectionist temptation. Finally, and above all, because there is no longer an uncontested leadership, an organizing divide or a common willingness to openness. This explains the difficulty in advancing the commercial negotiations of the Doha Round."

Middle East - Olmert in Paris - Hamas

"Improved Relations Between Israel and France"

Christophe Ayad in left-of-center Liberation (06/15): "After the U.S., Europe. Since his election, Olmert has been traveling to sell his plan for the West Bank... Olmert underscored the fact that President Chirac has qualified the conditions set by the Quartet as 'non negotiable,' ... But on the ground, it is the end of the truce between Hamas and Fatah... The worsening humanitarian situation is triggering growing concern among French diplomats, who, in private, vent their criticism of an 'absurd policy whose sole results is to throw the Palestinians into the arms of Hamas...'"

"Chirac Asks Olmert to Talk with the Palestinians"

Thierry Oberle in right-of-center Le Figaro (06/15): "Olmert did not get the support he was looking for. Chirac made it clear that the existence of two separate states required 'renewed negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority...' For Paris, there should be no new borders drawn unilaterally. While Olmert agrees, he reiterated the three conditions, which Hamas continues to reject... And so while Olmert was not able to get the support he received from Washington and London, he at least got an attentive French ear."

"Dear Ehud Olmert..."

Theo Klein in left-of-center Liberation (06/15): "You are, like me, a lawyer. You have been trained, as far as I can see, more to establish contracts than engage in combats. This is good, because there are many of us who are concerned about the lack of dialogue with the Palestinians. A dialogue is needed: it must be implemented with those who come to us. We cannot choose our interlocutors... Is it not in Israel's best interest to see the quick implementation of a Palestinian state? We must accept this reality... It is with the Palestinians, and the Jordanians that we must initiate this dialogue. And why not call for an international conference under the aegis of the UN... and lead this initiative with the support of the Quartet and Egypt?..."

"What to Do With Hamas?"

Alexandre Adler in right-of-center Le Figaro (06/15): "I will

explain, as I try to separate feelings and intellect, why we must do everything to preserve the Hamas government, at least for the time being... Abbas's intentions are honorable... It is also clear that his referendum has been suggested by Egypt, more so than by Israel... Supposing that it were ratified by the Palestinians ... the text remains unacceptable for Israel... But Hamas remains Israel's best trump card because Hamas cannot afford to lead its people to self-destruction... (with the help of Iran...) For the time being, Israel has grounds for not talking with fake Palestinian interlocutors who cannot legitimately make concessions... If on the other hand the complete evacuation of the territories goes hand in hand with improved living conditions for the Palestinians, then Hamas will have no reason to continue fomenting violence. We must therefore help Hamas to save face and guarantee the economic survival of the awakening Palestinian state... And so I plead in favor of this necessary albeit unpleasant solution."

Iran - Regional Strategy

"Iran Imposes Itself on the SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organization) Summit."

Jean-Jacques Mevel in right-of-center Le Figaro (06/15): "With little concern for the G8 that will be held in Saint Petersburg in a month, China has decided to hold its own summit, bringing together the Chinese president Hu Jintao, Vladimir Putin, Pakistan's Pervez Musharraf... and another president who may steal the show, Iran's Mahmoud Ahmadinejad... In Shanghai he will have the chance to meet with some of the heads of state who are the least inclined to vote in favor of sanctions against Iran... International attention will be riveted on China and Russia and their display of enthusiasm for reasoning with Iran... This will be difficult. Putin, for his part, is unhappy with NATO's inroads in the Ukraine and in central Asia and may be tempted to look at the Iran issue as a way to get back at the U.S. Meanwhile, Hu Jintao is adopting a less antagonistic strategy." STAPLETON